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O'Donnell, Thomas
Jefferson

Causes of war: an
indictment and an appeal

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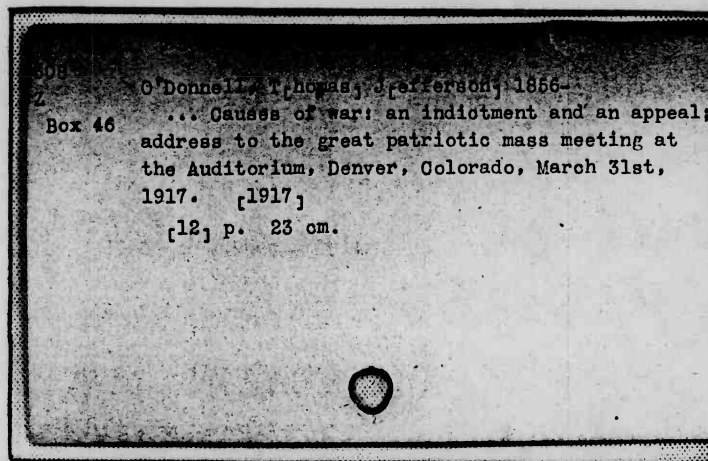
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Gift of the President

"I want that banner there, the Stars and Stripes, 'Old Glory,' to be found waving at the head of an American column, in hot pursuit of the helmeted Prussian legions, as they recross the border into their own country. I would have the strains of the 'Star Spangled Banner' mingle with the strains of 'Marseillaise,' as American troops join with French and English armies in this deliverance."

Causes of War

An Indictment and An Appeal

Address by
T. J. O'DONNELL

To the GREAT PATRIOTIC MASS
MEETING at the Auditorium, Denver,
Colorado, March 31st, 1917

308
2
Box 46

MS. N. 1917

Mr. Chairman, and Fellow Citizens of the Republic:

We meet, not to urge that war be begun, but to join our government in recognizing the fact that war exists.

We meet, not to urge the President into acts of war, but to tell the President that we will uphold his hands, in defending our citizens, from the war waged against them upon the seas, and in securing the safety of our shores.

We meet, not because we cherish, and not because we would express, feelings of rancor or hatred against any people, but to declare, that no ruler of any nation, shall be allowed to dictate to us upon what part of the world's highways we shall travel, nor when our goings shall be begun, nor what shall be our route or our destination.

We meet, because our fathers bought freedom for us, their children, with their blood, and we meet to prove that we, their children, are not so degenerate as to debate, with any Potentate or Power, whether that freedom shall be limited or circumscribed or restricted, on land or sea.

We meet, that the voice of this great nation, of more than one hundred millions, rolling and swelling in cadenced sound from either ocean, shall here, at the apex of the continent, find its complete enunciation.

We meet, not because we want land or rule or power, but because we want law and right and peace to reign in this world, of which we are a part.

We meet, not to draw the reddened sword of vengeance, but to unsheathe the shining sword of justice.

We demand that those who represent us in the government, those who have been commissioned by us to give voice to our sentiments and execute our conclusions, shall maintain a firm front in the face of the powerful and aggressive enemy who has challenged us; hence, it is our duty to see that there is no note of doubt or discord, in the message which we send to Washington tonight.

Let that message prove, that we are worthy successors of the wonderful men, who conquered these mountains and these plains, and that, as firm as are the rocks of our hills, on their foundations, is our determination to maintain the honor and the dignity of this nation, and its right to peacefully work out its destiny, in the same splendid faith and unconquerable hope, which inspired our fathers to win a name and a place among the nations of the earth.

And if you ask me why we should send any message; why we do not leave the solution, of all these questions to those whom we have put in the places of power, I answer, no free people should ever surrender, or fail to exercise, their right to be heard, ay! their right,

EVEN TO DIRECT, at a time when their national honor is insulted or their sovereignty threatened.

In autocracies, those who hold the reigns of power may assemble armies and light the flames of war, on their own motion, but in free democracies, the people who are to do the fighting, should let their representatives know when to make war and when to conclude peace.

We are not here, as Democrats, to support, nor as Republicans, to oppose, a Democratic President. Party lines are abolished. There are now no Democrats and no Republicans. We are here as American citizens, to hearten the President of the Republic—our President—by the pledge of our devoted loyalty, our lives and our fortunes, to such use as he shall put them, in the defense of our country, and may I not add, of those of you who were born under other flags, and raised under other skies, that you are just as loyal to the flag which floats over us tonight, as are those of us who have never known another flag or looked at other skies?

We realize, of course, that there must be a tugging at the heart strings of those who are called on to take part in a struggle between the land of their birth and the land of their adoption, between the land of their fathers and the land of their children, between the land to which they are attached by sentiment and the land to which they owe oath-bound duty and allegiance, but we feel strongly that there should be no paltering in the choice.

It is not my intention to, knowingly,* say one word which will add salt to the tears, I know must come to the eyes of many, at this parting of the ways. We have lived together in amity and in peace, and our children are to live here together after the troubles, which now peer at us out of the gloom, have passed and we are gone; they are here to be welded, by common ties, into the still greater America that is to come; an America so great that not even the eyes of the author of Revelation could see, nor could his great soul conceive of it.

It is in view of just such an emergency, as this, that one, foreign born, is required, before being permitted to say, "I am an American citizen," to raise his hand to Heaven, and on his oath, renounce allegiance to the ruler of his native land and swear fealty to this land of ours, to this flag, the protection of which he thus voluntarily seeks.

I will not believe that the loyalty of citizens of German birth cannot be trusted; events which are imminent will, I hope, prove the contrary. I spoke from this platform, with a very prominent German-born citizen of this community, on a notable occasion, not so long ago, and I will accept that German's pledge of loyalty to this nation and this government, and faithfulness against all enemies, as securely

as I would accept the pledge of Franz Seigel, or Carl Schurz, if those two great refugees from Hohenzollern tyranny and bad faith could be unconfined, and come here to dedicate themselves anew to the cause of liberty, in this, its latest struggle.

Certainly no German, or descendant of a German, who, with Schurz and Seigel, fled from Prussian despotism in 1848, to seek the protection of the Stars and Stripes, should have any feeling of divided duty, in any conflict that may come between the successor of the King who put a price upon their heads, and the government under whose protecting egis they have since lived and prospered.

If any national, or adherent of either of the belligerent countries, which are likely to be arrayed against us, shall contemplate acts of disloyalty here at home, let him remember, that the American people are patient and long suffering, but their wrath is a consuming flame, when it is aroused, and their vengeance is swift and terrible.

If you ask me, "What acts of this Imperial Autocrat constitute war against us," the answer is: "He has put to death peaceful American citizens, journeying on their lawful errands upon the seas of the world; he has assassinated, cruelly murdered, not only American men, but American women and babes; these murders have been plotted and carried on with such wanton abandon of human instincts and human feeling as to place the author of them beyond the pale of human kind, for as cruelly cold and unheeding of human life and human rights, as the iceberg which sank the Titanic and its priceless freight, were the brain which conceived and the hand that aimed, the torpedo which destroyed the Lusitania and the men and mothers and children who were its passengers."

After solemnly promising to abandon the further prosecution of this monstrous system of submarine warfare, and offering money indemnity for the American lives, unlawfully taken, the Kaiser's government, on February 1st last, almost without notice, resumed this method in still more hideous terror and in a wider zone.

The communication which the German government addressed to our government at that time, placed a limit upon our sovereignty; it told us where, upon the high seas, we might and might not travel; to and from what ports, and how often, we might, and might not, sail our ships, and it prescribed our course and our conduct, as if we had already become accustomed to click our heels in salute of a German governor.

Tell me, you descendants of the men who settled New England, Maryland, Virginia and the Carolinas; tell me, you men and women in whose veins flows the same kind of blood that was shed in the battles of the Revolution; tell me, was President Wilson right, in re-

fusing obedience to these edicts? Was he right in giving warning, that the threats made would be resisted by force and that if carried out they would be considered acts of war?

If he was right then, shall he and we now recant, and, as the price of peace, crook the pregnant hinges of the knee to the Helmeted Dictator, and hail him master of the world?

No! not if the soul of John Hancock, as well as the soul of John Brown, still goes marching on; not while the name of George Washington is revered and that of Andrew Jackson loved; not unless the race that produced Lincoln and Grant and Sherman and Sheridan and Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson and Albert Sydney Johnston has died out in the land.

There is not time tonight, to read the whole indictment, but I cannot omit mention of the fact that, while ostensibly at peace with our country, the German government has, under cover of our hospitality, used our own soil and the German ships which sought refuge in our harbors, as bases from which to make war against us; it has spread its agents over the land, to commit acts of violence against our citizens and our property, and against the property of belligerents, entitled to the protection of our laws.

The German ambassador, at Washington, was authorized to offer, and did offer, a large slice of our territory to Mexico, in an effort to induce that country and Japan to join in war upon us. Part of Colorado was included in the offered prize. It is only because of want of power, not because of want of inclination, that whole states have not been given over to conquest and Colorado dismembered.

Fellow citizens, how would you like to have the Mexican border moved up to the Arkansas river; to have Pueblo become the frontier meeting place, instead of El Paso and Juarez, with the Pueblo union depot and the steel works south of the line? How would you like to have our thriving cities along the Arkansas, east of Pueblo, and Cañon City and Salida and Buena Vista divided between "gringo" and "greaser," and how would you like to have the fair fields and orchards of our Western slope, the farms of San Luis Valley and the mines of San Juan, become a prize to be fought over by successive Mexican bandits? And, our American women, living there, fair haired, and with cheeks like the apple blossoms, what a recruiting ground for the harem of any Pancho Villa who should come riding out of the south. How do our pacifists like the picture?

Throughout this war, Germany has ever found it a sufficient excuse for every action, that German interests would be served by it. No matter how repugnant to the ordinarily accepted rules of civilized conduct, no matter how obnoxious to international law, if, in the opinion of the military chiefs of the Kaiser, the act would serve the Empire, that has been enough. This was the excuse, when Belgium was invaded; for this, a solemn treaty was denounced, and treated, as a "scrap of paper." This was sufficient excuse for the devastation of

Belgium, for the destruction of its cities, and for the enslavement and carrying into bondage, of the people of the territory conquered in Belgium and France. But the acts of vandalism have gone far beyond possible excuse of military exigency. The destruction of cathedrals and libraries, the levying of tribute, the general larceny, of all property of value, from the civil population, the commandeering of food, leaving the population to starve or subsist upon the charity of other nations, the rape of women, the murder of men and women who attempted to resist the gratification of the unrestrained lust of a libidinous soldiery; all these present a record that has not been exceeded in shameless licentiousness, by any war in Europe, since the Saracen was stopped at the gates of Vienna.

This savagery, manifested during more than two years, and reaching its abominable culmination of loathsome barbarity, during the recent retreat, has shocked the world.

Civilization stands aghast at the molten stream, from this volcano of hate, spit out by these baffled barbarians. If these men shall find the means to torpedo hell and let loose its noxious vapors upon mankind they will only increase their capacity for frightfulness; they will not change the character of their destructive devilishness.

For acts of savagery no greater than those which have accompanied the invading army in Belgium and France, the nations dismembered the Turkish Empire in Europe and created several autonomous and independent states in the Balkans.

These acts are not the acts of a soldiery made up of savage hordes recruited from the confines of Asia, or Bedouins from African deserts. This army is not assembled under the green banner of the Prophet. This destruction of property, this enslaving of peoples, this violation of women; these acts of private murder, are the story of an army recruited from a land boastful of its culture, a land of universities, of teeming cities, of quiet homes, from a people naturally gentle and generous, but whose nature has been distorted by education in a savage lust for conquest, during a half century; an education begun and kept up for the very purpose of making them capable of these frightful excesses.

They make war in the name of two Christian sovereigns and the Mohammedan Turk, but their methods of warfare are the methods of the Turk, and not of the Christian. In the unholy alliance between the Christian Hohenzollern, and the Mohammedan Turk, the precepts of the gospels have been cast down, and the teachings of the Koran exalted.

The Denver Times, of Tuesday, contains a dispatch from the United Press Staff Correspondent, with the British armies in France.

in which a woman, in one of the villages just abandoned by the German army, is quoted as saying:

"My twenty-year-old sister, with lots of other girls and women, was sent away by these Prussians—to where and to what fate we don't know."

The cure at Voyennes, Father Caron, said:

"Many of our girls were taken from time to time. Now all women able to work * * * have been carried away slaves to Germany. We pray that they may suffer no sadder fate."

I speak of these things, not to stir your blood, but I pray God that this picture of the cruel sufferings of other peoples, may stir you into action to save our own daughters from the danger of a similar fate.

At a meeting in Madison Square Garden a week ago last night, ex-Secretary Elihu Root used these words:

"We are able to hold this peaceful meeting * * * because we are protected by the navies and armies of the Allies."

The newspapers report that an old man in the gallery shouted, "You are a liar and a coward to make that statement." The vigor, and genuinely American style, of the old man's attack, indicate that he was neither a German nor a pacifist; besides, the newspapers report that he was an old soldier. Probably he, like many other Americans, had never thought of this startling truth until he heard it thus boldly stated. His patriotism was shocked into the outbreak by the suddenness of the disclosure. Millions of our countrymen seem to rest securely under the same thick blanket of conceited ignorance. But those words of Secretary Root are the actual, literal, disgraceful, humiliating truth.

In the face of the fact, that the present war has disclosed, that only trained armies, with weapons, which need years for the making, can effectively resist the experienced legions of Imperial Power, we still have babbling idiots, who prate of an army of patriots springing up overnight. Suckling babes should have more sense.

We have been growing fat and lazy and soft, physically, intellectually and morally, and the world knows this and knows that we are rich. What more tempting bait could be presented to the cupidity of an armed but impoverished world? We display no more judgment than the man who takes his treasure, unguarded, into a country infested by bandits, no more than a man who leaves his home and his family, unprotected, on the border land where civilization and savagery meet and clash.

The man who opposes universal military training is the man who needs it most; the man who is in favor of it is the man who will volunteer, but, the volunteer does not make a soldier until he has been trained. Without training he can neither help us nor hurt the enemy. What we need is, men with military training, who can be called to the colors.

The only genuinely democratic way to raise an army is by con-

scription, and it should be a conscription which does not admit of the purchase of substitutes. This imposes the burden of defending the country alike upon the rich and the poor.

The man who is opposed to conscription will be found, generally, to be the man who can never be gotten into the army except by conscription.

I have nothing but respect and sympathy for the mother who would protect her son from going to war, and I have nothing but contempt for the son who will not protect his mother by going to war.

The men who oppose the defense of American honor and the vindication of American rights; the men who resist every effort to prepare the nation to defend itself against wrong and outrage; the men who would leave us helpless and unprotected, against the attack of any marauder who may choose to make us his prey, these men call themselves pacifists.

In this connection, let me read a card which is being circulated here in Denver. It is addressed for return to a so-called "Anti-War Committee." Whoever are responsible for its circulation have used a woman's name as cover for their cowardice and their treason, as it goes forth upon the sole responsibility of "Mary L. Jeff, Secretary." The following pledge is printed over blanks left for name and address:

"In the event of war being declared against any foreign country, I pledge myself not to enlist as a soldier, and to resist conscription to the limit."

The Constitution of the United States provides that "treason against the United States shall consist in levying war against them, or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort."

I don't know the Lady Mary, but if, "In the event of war being declared against any foreign country," she shall circulate, or procure anyone else to circulate, or induce, or endeavor to induce anyone to sign, much less to carry out, this pledge, she will be guilty of treason against the United States of America, and every poor, deluded victim of her treason, as well as those traitors who combine with her, will be guilty of the same odious offense, and under the laws of the United States the punishment for treason is death. And the people of this portion of the United States are going to learn, rapidly, to execute the law.

If this Miss or Madam, as the case may be, were in Germany, and should there give countenance to the conduct she is pursuing here, her sex would not protect her, she would be shot to death before she had

time to say her prayers. Let it be understood that this interlude is a warning, not a threat.

If France, after having purchased the partial redemption of its territory had set down and devoted its energies, alone, to becoming rich and allowed itself to become soft and yellow, the whole of that sunny land would now be overrun and devastated, as are its border provinces. It would today be but a name among the peoples of the earth, and thus every man would have lost a country, for you know Benjamin Franklin said:

"Every man has two countries, his own, and France."

Instead of this, Bourbon and Orleanist, Bonapartist and Republican Huguenot and Catholic and Free Thinker, set to work to make the men of France a bulwark of defense against the next attack. They had had full opportunity to sense the purpose of the power that has since sought to crush them. They knew the spirit which animated the minds controlling that power. They had felt the iron heel, they had been ground into the dust, because they were not prepared, in 1870.

And yet, prepared as they were, this time, helped as they have been, by England and Russia and Italy, they have been able to protect but a part of their country; the deadly blight of brutal conquest has spread over the remainder. To be unprepared costs its toll in life and in money, as England and Russia have found out.

For nearly a hundred years, now, we have maintained the Monroe Doctrine. Briefly stated, the Monroe Doctrine means that we will resist any attempt of a European power to establish itself, or extend its possessions, upon this hemisphere. The rest of the earth has been conquered and divided between the aggrandizing nations of the world. It is a part of fundamental Prussian thought, which they have so impressed upon the entire German nation, that it is believed with the devotion of religious zeal, that the German people have a right to take land where they will, for their ever increasing, overflowing population, and that it is their duty, to themselves and to God, to impress their Kultur upon other peoples, just as Mahomet, and his successors, impressed his doctrines, even at the point of the sword.

This may be called the Monroe Doctrine of Prussia,

What happens when an irresistible force meets an immovable body?

The Monroe Doctrine and the doctrine that there is a divinely imposed duty, to extend the blessings of Kultur to unwilling peoples, cannot stand together.

The flag of one European monarchy, Denmark, was lowered on the possessions of that kingdom, in the Western hemisphere, today and the Stars and Stripes were raised aloft instead. This is the consummation of a measure, for our own protection and our own peaceful expansion, which has often been interfered with by the country which is now making war upon us. Shall that flag remain floating in the balmy breezes and o'er the translucent seas above which it was this day hoisted, or, shall we be ordered to take it down, or let it be shot down by a hostile power?

Shall we keep the Panama canal, as the connecting link between our far separated coasts, or shall we subject ourselves to the danger of having it pass into hostile hands, to be used as an instrument for our undoing?

That country of the earth, which contains the greatest potential power of any of the so-called civilized countries of the universe; that country which has for centuries been sunk in the abysmal depths of the darkest despotism, has, within the month, like some gigantic chrysalis, broken its shell and emerged, before the startled eyes of the world, clad in the flowing robes of republican liberty.

Russian freedom needs protection from Prussian militarism.

Let us welcome Russia, newly free, to the table of democracy! and resolve to help her keep a place there. Let us join with Russia in an effort to unshackle others, to break the fetters that still clank upon the limbs of another people, a people who should be free, although they seem willing to be bound. We shall thus prove that, instead of being an enemy of that people, we are, indeed, their dearest friend, as we would like to be.

And, there is France!

What is the state of the American heart towards France?

Without France we had never been a free people.

Without France the Declaration of Independence would have remained an untried theory.

Are we willing to do for France what France did for us?

France gave us men and money, when we were sorely pressed.

Shall we give France men and money, in this time of her desperate need?

Will we help to release the strangle hold that is about her neck and to remove the iron heel from the cherished bosom of this, our roster-mother?

Will we assist in saving the true temples of civilization for posterity?

The time is indeed ripe to pay a great debt.

Our creditor has waited, nearly a century and a half, without ask-

ing a penny in payment, and we have grown rich and powerful, and are able to pay.

Are we, also, willing?

Some there be who say that we should lend money at interest; others that we should lend money, without interest; and still others think we should give money, and then, there are some, who would give both money and men.

As for me, I say, GIVE France money, give her a thousand million dollars; that is the sum exacted from her by Prussia at the point of the bayonet in 1870. This will enable her to prosecute to a glorious victory this war so wantonly forced upon her. Then give her everything else she needs; everything that she can use to her advantage, but let us GIVE and give freely and give quickly and give without thought of return, without thought of profit.

Let our reward be, to help drive the invader from the soil of France, and the restoration of her lost provinces, and let us help restore little Belgium to her place among the nations, and set one Prince, who has shown himself every inch a man, back upon his diminutive and democratic throne.

We will thus teach this Mad Mullah of Europe, that the great Democracy of the Western Hemisphere will not sit idly by while he violates and makes sport of her rights. We will thus cleanse our own soul of the sordid stain of mere money getting, and vindicate our posterity against the charge, that we pursue dollars, rather than uphold ideals.

I want that banner there, the Stars and Stripes, "Old Glory," to be found waving at the head of an American column, in hot pursuit of the Helmeted Prussian legions as they recross the borders of France and Belgium into their own country. I would have the strains of the "Star Spangled Banner" mingle with the strains of "Marsellaise," as American troops join with French and English armies in this deliverance.

We can serve France best by furnishing, mostly, money and material, rather than men, but we should send her some men, to gladden the hearts of her soldiers, just as the men under Rochambeau gladdened the hearts of the Continental army in 1779. The spirit of Washington shall inspire these men, and the spirit of Lafayette shall meet them at the landing, and the spirit of Joan of Arc shall hover over them and their allies, and lead them to victory on the battlefield.

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